

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 080 891

CE 000 109

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TITLE Non-Traditional Study and the Adult Student.
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Students; Alternative Schools; Educational Innovation; *Experimental Colleges; *External Degree Programs; Higher Education; Independent Study; Open Education; *Post Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

Nontraditional higher education is a movement toward increasing the options open to an individual in the pursuit of post secondary education. Its major emphasis is in recognition of individual differences and making institutions more flexible in response to them. This paper describes many programs and proposals throughout the country, giving special attention to two: University Without Walls and Empire State College. In most of these programs the institution has some role in planning, defining, or approving the educational direction of students. External degree programs are more often limited to counseling functions. The role of the public library is being broadened to meet the new demands placed upon it. The activities of two organizations sponsored by the College Board and ETS are brought up to date: the Commission on Nontraditional Study and the Office of New Degree Programs. The impact of innovative programs on Traditional higher education is discussed.. (MS)



ED 080891

"NON-TRADITIONAL STUDY AND THE ADULT STUDENT"

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EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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"NON-TRADITIONAL STUDY AND THE ADULT STUDENT"

"In the past ten or fifteen years the greatest challenges to traditional education have come at the primary and secondary levels, but the impact of fresh concepts can now be seen in higher learning as well. New learning forms, new places of learning, new times to learn, new technologies -- and, above all, new learners -- are visible in hundreds of places of higher learning. Their variety would not have been thought possible a decade ago. Such changes are not always comfortably embraced by tradition bound academics, but most hear the clamor for change and find the new pressures increasingly persuasive.

The question is no longer what new departures from traditions are possible, but whether all this experimentation reflects a true and honest turn of events or just a momentary fad. It is still too early to tell. But whatever their eventual outcomes, there now remains little doubt that a new openness exists where it never existed before. Whether fad or genuine change, these efforts are destined to leave their indelible mark on higher education."

So George Bonham begins his editorial in the March issue of Change magazine commenting on the work of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study that recently completed two years of deliberation.

We want to spend our time this morning looking at some of these "departures from traditions", many of which will not seem that unusual to you who have been involved in evening colleges -- one of the first successful challenges to the dominant notion of higher education as a residential daytime activity.

Although we all talk about nontraditional study, and many of our institutions "have it", it is a concept almost impossible to define and a set of practices whose boundaries cannot be circumscribed. Samuel B. Gould, Chairman of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study, comments that "Non-Traditional Study may be defined in simplest terms as a group of changing educational patterns caused by the changing needs and opportunities of society. Much of it is not new, indeed there have always been nontraditional approaches to education in one place or another, some of them very successful. But current perceptions of the needs of new and hitherto unserved segments of our population, together with strong dissatisfactions with results from those segments traditionally served, have now catapulted nontraditional study to the forefront of public attention".

If, to my mind, there is any single trait that characterizes nontraditional study, it is an attitude that recognizes individual differences. This attitude requires the

development and use of alternate instructional processes and diverse learning resources to respond to individual needs and differences.

By suggesting that nontraditional study provides the means for the educational community to be more responsive to individual needs does not mean that NTS is limited to "individually-prescribed instruction", "individual majors", or "independent study". Rather, NTS is a movement toward increasing the options open to an individual. In a sense, NTS is the evidence that the rather monolithic structure of programs of higher education in America (and most of the world) is giving way to a pluralistic structure which recognizes several choices along a number of dimensions: that learning occurs in many ways, not just in teacher-centered classes meeting three times a week; that learning occurs in many places, not just on college campuses; that learning occurs at many different times, not just between eight and two, Monday to Friday; that learning is not something defined by the faculty, but that the student can and should play an important role in defining his learning experience, and perhaps most important, that learning is not limited to persons under age 22, but rather, that learning should be a lifelong process with a person choosing different options at different stages in their life. Rather than a predefined path to be labeled "an educated man", an

individual is now challenged through the many options to become a continuously learning person.

In a few minutes it is difficult to know which programs or proposals to describe. The roster is long and growing daily. The University of Maine has its Open University proposal, the Vermont Community College is a fascinating approach to the use of statewide resources to meet the needs of a largely rural-small town population. The Massachusetts State Colleges are experimenting with a variety of off-campus degrees while some people at UMass have just released a proposal for a Massachusetts Open University. The Connecticut legislature currently has before it a bill to create an external degree program administered by the Board of Higher Education. This is the result of a two-year study by a state-wide task force. The presidents of the public universities in New England have discussed the possibility of a New England Open University, while over the border in Quebec, the Teleuniversity is taking university instruction to the isolated villages and hamlets of the province.

New York State is overflowing with nontraditional programs. The Regents External Degree program has already awarded over 200 associates degrees while SUNY's Empire State College has almost reached capacity, at least until new regional centers are opened. All of the institutions

in several central NY counties have banded together in the Central NY Consortium for the External Degree. Several established branches of SUNY are experimenting with new degree patterns, frequently involving interinstitutional cooperation. In New Jersey, Thomas A. Edison College is in operation and has begun to hold its first administrations of tests leading to a degree. Here in Pennsylvania, Jack Russell, former vice-provost at Penn, has been chairing a state-wide task force planning an open university variously called Ben Franklin University or Commonwealth College. (Jerry Ziegler spoke to your last meeting so you are probably aware of his vision of the future of Pennsylvania higher education.) Even Penn State, that fortress of traditionalism, has had a faculty committee suggest that they take the first radical step of granting a degree to students who have been enrolled only on a part-time basis. The University of Maryland has long taken its traditional programs to remote military basis. Its College of the Air is now making use of materials developed for the British Open University. Many of the DC institutions have some type of nontraditional program and a new institution, Washington International College, has been founded to make use of the many community resources for learning experiences. One off-shoot of the UWW is Communitas which considers its campus to radiate out from Washington to Baltimore in the

east to the mountains of West Virginia in the west, and north into southern Pennsylvania. It stresses not only the aquisition of academic knowledge but the application of this knowledge in the process of community development and social change.

In the south, Florida stands out as the location of a number of significant developments. The new public senior university, Florida International, is charged with providing an external degree for residents of the state. Nova University is offering a doctoral program that reaches all over the country. One of their small study groups serves Montgomery and Bucks County here in Pennsylvania. The University of Alabama has set up "New College" to bring some change and flexibility into their undergraduate programs.

In the midwest most states are moving on some type of nontraditional program. Ohio is taking its first hesitant steps with an "Extended University" while in Michigan, Central Michigan University offers several bachelor's and master's programs designed to be responsive to the needs of fully employed adults. In Illinois, the BHE has proposed Lincoln State University which would draw on the instructional resources of all existing colleges and universities as well as non-collegiate institutions, such as museums, industry, etc. Simultaneously, the Board of Governors over several of the Illinois State Universities has initiated a

Governors' degree that requires little time in residence on any one campus. The Extension division of the University of Wisconsin has proposed an external degree program and has a pilot program underway in four southeastern Wisconsin counties. University of Wisconsin is also considering a new urban-oriented institution in downtown Milwaukee to serve the urban population not now well served by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Minneapolis-Saint Paul is served by Minnesota Metropolitan State College while a number of other Minnesota state colleges are developing some type of external degree program. Iowa's Commonwealth College is in the second year of planning while in Missouri, the coordinating council for higher education is suggesting an open university. The new State University of Nebraska (SUN) is underway with a heavy reliance on television and other electronic media. Oklahoma's BLS program has served as a model for a number of more recently developed programs. A number of institutions in the Dallas area are cooperating in exploring the possibility of an external degree, Lone Star State University? While Collegio Jacinto Trevino is setting an exciting model of a Chicano controlled and community oriented institution in the Rio Grande valley.

All of the colleges and universities in the Denver area are cooperating with the Denver Public Library in the development of an independent learning program which can be

translated into degree credit through CLEP. The University of Northern Colorado has packaged a number of its programs and made them available to groups from Washington DC to Guam.

In the State of Washington the community colleges have been particularly active in developing additional ways of serving individuals not now well served. Both the University of California System and the California State Colleges and University System have moved from the study and task force stage into a variety of experimental nontraditional programs. At the same time the Coordinating Council on Higher Education ^{in Calif} has suggested an external degree granting institution independent of the existing systems. The University of Hawaii is working under a legislative mandate to develop an open university which will serve all of the islands.

This brief cataloging of new degree programs would be incomplete without mentioning two or three programs that are hard to pin down to a geographical location. Antioch College, that used to do some unusual things in Yellow Springs, Ohio, now has 28 locations scattered around the U.S. The UWW of the UECU is in operation in 20 locations, while the Community College of the Air Force presumably exists wherever air force personnel are stationed.

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Let's take a few minutes now to look at a few of these programs in some detail. Many institutions have reduced or eliminated the stated requirements for a degree so that an individual can shape his own curriculum. In some places, this provides but a reordering of traditional classes and experiences, whereas others provide for or encourage off-campus or other types of nontraditional learning experiences. In a number of situations, the student's plan for achieving his objectives is expressed in terms of a "contract" negotiated with a faculty adviser or a committee.

One of the most widely publicized programs to help individual students plan and implement their own educational experience is the University Without Walls, sponsored by the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities. UWW has 20 participating institutions at present and describes itself as "an alternative form of higher education which seeks to build highly individualized and flexible programs of learning and makes use of new and largely untapped resources for teaching and learning. It moves toward a new faith in the student and his capacity for learning on his own, while at the same time providing close and continuing contact between student and teacher". Central to the UWW concept is the teacher-adviser-facilitator who works with the student in the planning, development and evaluation of his UWW program. This adviser may be on the

faculty of the institution or may be someone without a regular tie to the institution. For each institution participating in UWW, there is an Inventory of Learning Resources that the student might use in accomplishing his learning objectives (regular classes at his own or other institutions, internships and field experiences, independent study, travel, programmed materials, cassettes, and other technological aids). This helps the student and adviser plan a program appropriate to the students' objectives. Criteria for judging the achievement of objectives and the length of time required to earn the degree are negotiated by the student and adviser. A final evaluation of the students' work is usually made by a review committee of faculty, students, and other persons with whom the student has been working. The degree may be awarded by the sponsoring institution or by the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities, which has recently gained correspondent status with the North Central Association.

Some 3000 students were enrolled in UWW during the last school year, ranging in age from 16 to 73, with about a third over 23. Several of the participating units have an unusually high proportion of blacks and Puerto Ricans.

Although only in its second year, UWW has demonstrated that there is a sizable group of individual of all ages, races, and economic levels ready to accept the challenge of

directing their own learning experiences. The approach is being considered or adopted in a variety of other training and learning situations.

To p 12 — Another example of an alternative route to a degree that is not confined to a set time or location is Empire State College, part of the SUNY system. Empire State was established with a dual focus on non-classroom modes of learning and on the cooperative utilization of existing educational resources at SUNY's seventy-odd locations, other colleges and universities, and in the community at large.

The student enrolls in Empire State through one of the area learning centers opened last year in Albany, Rochester, and New York City, and Long Island

The process of being an Empire State student puts considerable emphasis on discussion and negotiations. Admission is based on the college's ability to meet the students' needs. But the responsibility rests with the student to gather and marshal the information that will demonstrate how the college can meet his or her needs. After admission, the student attends an orientation workshop at which faculty describe the resources of the center and the different ways a student may go about learning. The student uses this workshop to clarify his goals and to explore the resources available to help him achieve them.

After the Orientation Workshop, the student works with a Mentor to lay out a program - "clarifying what he wants to achieve and settling on the instructional materials, the direct experiences, the outside tutors, the courses at nearby institutions, which will be employed". This plan must include provision for thorough evaluation of his accomplishment. The various steps or activities anticipated in this plan are usually specified in a contract between mentor and student, specifying the activities and responsibilities of both parties. The Contract may cover any time period, a month, a quarter, or a year, and is completed with an evaluation conference including the mentor and others who were built into the evaluation plan. The Contract for completing the next portion of the student's total program has its roots in this evaluation. Empire State suggests some organizing frameworks for a program but the student is not bound to them. He has a great freedom in shaping his program but it must "form a comprehensive and complex pattern of college level work pertinent to the student's purposes". It cannot be just a random collection of educational experiences but must make sense as a whole in relation to the student's goals and objectives.

X Both University Without Walls and Empire State are willing to have students with no previous college experience. Several other institutions have developed programs

that pre-suppose two years of college, or its equivalent. These include the Florida State University System External Degree program, administered by Florida International University, Minnesota Metropolitan State College, and the experimental programs offered by the California State University and Colleges, and the University of California. The California State System has put considerable emphasis on programs for people whose personal or occupational circumstances do not permit them to spend major blocks of time on a campus, with programs designed to meet employer needs, etc. There also has been a strong emphasis on cooperative ventures between the various segments of higher education. Thus, for example, a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice offered by California State University, Sacramento, can be earned through learning centers set up in two community colleges some distance from Sacramento. Some of the instruction in these learning centers is provided by faculty drawn from two other state colleges. Through this procedure, an established degree program is made available to law enforcement officers who could not attend a full-time program and who are located in an area where part-time work on the Sacramento campus would demand excessive amounts of commuting.

All of the degree programs mentioned above, UWW, ESC, CSUC, do recognize that learning does occur in many places

beside a particular campus but all give the institution some role in planning, defining, or approving the circumstances under which learning takes places. There are two programs in which the degree granting institution plays no role in the learning experience (except for an occasional study guide or reading list). The student is totally on his own in guiding the learning process. The institution merely assesses the outcomes of that process and attests to that achievement through the award of a degree. These two programs are the New York Regents External Degree Program and New Jersey's Thomas A. Edison College.

Branch 115 The New York program was the recipient of an \$800,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ford Foundation. It is administered through the NY State Department of Education and the degree is awarded by the University of the State of New York, the statutory body with jurisdiction over all public and private colleges and universities in the state, as well as libraries, museums, etc. Their ^{first} commencement was held on September 28 at which 77 persons received Associate in Arts degrees.

The New Jersey program, under the supervision of the Board of Higher Education, is offered through a newly created non-teaching state college, Thomas A. Edison College. These two programs are working together through a bi-state cooperative agreement so that one can describe their procedures and plans in near-identical terms.

An Associate of Arts degree is offered this academic year. The requirements for this degree can be met entirely through the College Proficiency Examination Program or the College-Level Examination Program. Credits earned through formal college study or from USAFI may also be counted toward the A.A.

A bachelor's degree in business will soon be implemented. The general education requirements for this degree can be met through CLEP or CPEP, and special examinations are being built by the two states to evaluate a candidate's competence in several areas of business management.

Further down the drawing board are plans for an Associate in Applied Science in Nursing degree, and a Bachelor of Arts. Also under discussion is an Associate in Management.

These programs are pioneering in extending the concept of credit-by-examination to an entire degree, implying, in the process, that a degree should represent a publicly demonstrable set of competencies. The growth of the whole area of non-traditional study, but especially these degrees by examination have called into question the meaning of the college degree. What does it represent?

X Institutions that are not colleges or universities are playing significant educational roles, especially for the independent learner.

Up in the Syracuse area, the Central New York Planning Consortium for the External Degree has recently received a grant to enable it to begin the development of a guidance-support system, called an "External Learning Service", to serve people engaged in nontraditional study.

Central to the idea of the "external learning service" is the provision of counseling service throughout the region. The counselor would interview the student, arrange appropriate tests of interest, aptitude, and prior achievement, and then help the student work out his occupational and educational goals and a plan to achieve them, drawing on the learning resources available.

Not only would the "external learning service" help the individual develop plans, but they propose to provide a "facilitative" function, helping the student gain access to learning resources, meet other students pursuing non-traditional patterns of study, and so on.

The consortium also proposes to provide, through the "external learning service", a means for individuals to have the outcome of their learning experiences validated for later transmittal to the degree awarding institutions.

An old learning resource, the public library, is taking on a new and active role.

In January a new project was initiated by the Denver Public Library in cooperation with the colleges and universities in Metropolitan Denver. This project has been

supported by Adult Education Council, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the College Board through its Denver office, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

The basic intent of the program will be to (1) extend campus and public library services to persons of the general public in the Denver area who wish to continue their education beyond a post-secondary level who are unable or unwilling to pursue study at a college or university in the traditional manner and (2) to provide the means by which these persons may receive college credit for their efforts.

The Denver Public Library has the materials, space facilities, and personnel that may be used by anyone with the interest and motivation to independently pursue a course of study over an extended period of time. The unique features of this program will be the emphasis on self-learning and the potential for translating that learning into academic credits at participating colleges

Participating institutions of higher education in the Denver area will administer examinations to persons who feel that they are competent in an academic area and would like to receive college credit for their competence. Most of the examinations that will be used for measuring such competence will be those of the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), although departmental examinations may also

be used. The testing portion of this project is, of course, optional; many persons may wish to participate, in the self-learning part of the course solely for purposes of self-enrichment.

Because of the important role libraries can play in expanding the opportunities for learning, the College Board recently established the Office of Library Independent Study and Guidance Projects with the financial support of the U.S. Office of Education, the Council on Library Resources, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. This Office should help libraries become a central force in nontraditional approaches to higher education by providing advisory services and workshops for libraries, by collecting and disseminating information about other libraries' efforts, community reactions, and the experience of adults using a library's services.

Any review of nontraditional study in 1973 would be incomplete without mention of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study. This Commission was sponsored jointly by College Board and ETS with funding from the Carnegie Corporation. The Commission, chaired by Samuel Gould, began its deliberations in 1971 and made its final report last month at an invitational conference in Atlanta. At its beginning - the Commission was charged:

- 1) To discover and to look into all aspects of non-traditional post-secondary education, including the external degree, now in operation or planned;

- 2) To evaluate the desirability and feasibility of such study;
- 3) To identify the inadequacies in current data necessary for intelligent decision making and to press for correction of such inadequacies.
- 4) To make recommendations for creating whatever additional machinery seems appropriate to strengthening the guarantees of quality in these forms of education;
- 5) To explore the possibility of additional experimental models;
- 6) To assure easy accessibility to the large body of information that is presently unsystematized.

First assembling in March 1971, the Commission went about its task in several different ways. "It has gone about some of its work quietly and privately, seeking within itself the wisdom from which to form sound judgments. It also, however, sought for and responded to opportunities to engage with others involved or interested in non-traditional study. It has learned much from others, and it has shared with many--through publications, formal and informal discussions, and correspondence--the information and insight it gained as its work progressed. It has initiated a comprehensive program of research at the national level to gather data on aspects of non-traditional study." (Valentine)

The Commission has frequently worked through subcommittees assigned to explore various portions of the problem. Members of the Commission met with representatives of private institutions, public colleges and universities, community colleges, the accrediting agencies.

^{Over}
About a year ago, Mr. Gould issued a first report on the Commission which many of you have probably seen: New Dimensions for the Learner. In April, ⁷² Jossey-Bass published a small volume, Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, containing some of the staff papers prepared for the Commission with a prologue by Mr. Gould. At the recommendation of the Commission, Cy Houle, one of the commissioners, and ~~John Summerskill~~ ^{has} ~~are~~ ^{and} preparing a book on the history, philosophical basis, forms, strengths and weaknesses of external degrees. *Jossey Bass*

In its final report in February, the Commission made it clear that they had never reached a definition of non-traditional study although they did reach a general consensus that it was less a system than "an attitude that puts the student first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's need than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity, and de-emphasizes time and space or even course requirements in favor of competence and, where applicable, performance".

The Commission also made it clear that they were not advocating a breaking down of traditional institutions but rather the addition of alternatives and the expansion of opportunity, clearly an evolutionary approach to change.

Although there are 58 specific recommendations in the report, they can be summarized into "seven areas for major decisions and actions during the next decade".

1. Lifetime learning, continuing and concurrent, is a concept that has a new appropriateness today and that requires a new pattern of support.
2. A shift of emphasis in colleges and universities from degree-granting to service to the learner is under way and should be expanded, thus clarifying the need to counter what currently has become a degree-granting obsession.
3. A reorientation or redirection of faculty understandings and commitments, together with an increase in in-service development, is needed so that there may be better knowledge and use of non-traditional forms and materials.
4. An organized effort toward more intelligent and widespread use of educational technology should be made, with special emphasis upon programming for cable television, knowledge of computers, use of videotape recorders, and possibilities for satellite broadcasting.
5. Creation of new agencies to make possible easy access to information and better ways to disseminate it, to perform guidance and counseling services, and to be assessors and repositories of credit for student achievement will be necessary.
6. Development of new evaluative tools to match the non-traditional arrangements now evolving is required so that accreditation and credentialing will have appropriate measures for quality.
7. Cooperation and collaboration among collegiate, community, and alternate educational entities should be encouraged so that new and more diverse educational possibilities in program and structure may come into being.

This final report will soon be published by Jossey-Bass under the title of Diversity by Design.

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To provide a factual base from which the Commission's recommendations could develop, ETS has been engaged in a research program funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Educational Foundation of America. The research program has six major areas of inquiry:

Students

Areas of Learning

Systems of Instruction

Credits and Measurement

Accreditation

Financing

was

The data from the research program ~~is being~~ ^{is} made available to the Commission for use in preparing the ~~Commission's~~ report. In addition, the data will be released in a series of monographs and possibly several book length reports before the end of the current academic year. Incidentally, a group with interests similar to those of the Commission has been functioning at the graduate level. This group is known as the Panel on Alternate Approaches to Graduate Education. It is sponsored by the Council of Graduate Schools in the U.S. and the Graduate Record Examination Board.

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~~The other~~ joint activity of ETS and the College Board in this area *should be mentioned* is
the Office of New Degree Programs. During the first year of its existence,
this was known as the Office of External Degree Plans, but over that year
"plans" began actual "programs" and "External" proved to be both undefinable
and limiting. Consequently, as of July, the name changed. The Office makes
available the combined resources of the College Board and ETS to institutions
interested in broadening educational opportunity through the development of
alternative degree programs. The Office works primarily in two ways: through
advising and consulting with institutions, state agencies, or others engaged
in college-level instruction; and through the compilation and dissemination
of relevant information and research. This latter, clearinghouse, function
has led to several reports or publications. In the spring of 1971 there was
"An Inventory of External Degree Programs and Proposals." More recently
"External Study for Post-Secondary Students: A Brief Annotated Bibliography"
was issued. *In November we published*
~~Within the next few days, a more comprehensive compendium entitled~~
"Increasing the Options: Recent Developments in College and University Degree
Programs^{*already dated*}~~, will be available.~~ This publication is arranged in four sections:
The first reports on actual operational programs; the second describes a
variety of proposals at various stages of development--some but the ideas of

individuals, others ^{are} well organized, likely to be implemented plans; the third section reports on various studies, experimental programs, or other data collecting or summarizing efforts to guide ^{the} planning of non-traditional study activities. The final section describes some of the services or activities which are supportive of the new degree programs.

The title of this publication, Increasing the Options was chosen because it reflects what non-traditional study is all about. "Traditional" higher education is not meant in a pejorative sense, any more than "non-traditional" is a synonym for "good". Many different alternatives are needed. Higher Education is just beginning the process of recognizing and responding to the amazing diversity within the post-secondary population. Some institutions have responded by loosening the time and space dimension, providing instruction at off-campus locations and at times convenient to students with other commitments. Other institutions have made efforts to attract and serve new client groups. Elsewhere, the assumptions regarding the nature of the learning experience ^{have} ~~has~~ changed. Faculty have recognized that valid educational experience do occur in settings other than the classroom and it has become possible to include such experience within a plan of study. Increasingly, the student plays a stronger role in determining the overall shape of his education, directing it to his personal interests and goals. In short, higher education is beginning to respond to the real needs of real people rather than making ^{all} ~~the~~ students conform to the relatively inflexible patterns and methods that most of us experienced as students.

Some of these new programs have been criticized for emphasizing the acquisition of a degree rather than the learning process. Yet this same criticism can legitimately be leveled at most of higher education. The economic benefits associated with having a college degree reinforce ~~the~~

earning a
obtaining of degrees, rather than becoming well educated. The rationale underlying most non-traditional study is that a person should be rewarded for what he knows and the skills he possesses, rather than for the means through which he achieved them.

If, as I have tried to suggest, we are rapidly increasing the options of how, when, and where and individual can learn, our basis for rewards and credentials will have to shift to the competencies an individual can demonstrate rather than the type or location of ^{his} ~~their~~ educational experience. Such a shift would have several benefits for our society. Manpower needs in key sectors could be met more easily than they now are if individuals received their credentials (both academic and occupational) based on demonstrated achievement rather than on number of hours spent in class. For example, many health manpower needs could be filled quickly if recently discharged medical corpsmen could translate their medical training and experience into credentials that would be acceptable in civilian hospitals, without having to take college courses covering material already mastered. Similarly, increased flexibility could be introduced into the American work force if people were helped to new careers by being able to demonstrate the relevant skills and knowledge they already possess, rather than having to take an entire program designed for someone with no relevant previous experience or education.

Although difficult to quantify, the effect on our society of having more citizens gain personal satisfaction and fulfillment through the increased options opened by marketable credentials is an important consideration. Such citizens are in a better position to join the mainstream of our society or to challenge the direction it is taking.

Even the higher education establishment itself would benefit. If performance or demonstrated achievement, rather than the length of time served,

becomes the basis for awarding academic recognition, many colleges and universities may be forced to alter their practices in evaluating and rewarding their traditional students. This change could even lead to rethinking the college curriculum to define educational objectives susceptible to publicly observable standards for evaluation. Rather than debasing higher education, the recognition of non-traditional learning might bring many rigidly traditional colleges and universities to a renewed concern for quality and relevance in teaching and learning in our rapidly changing society.

ERIC Clearinghouse

AUG 1 1973

on Adult Education